

## DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 326 501

SP 032 731

AUTHOR Hjelm, John R.  
TITLE Gamesmanship: It's No Trivial Pursuit!  
PUB DATE 84  
NOTE 10p.  
PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom Use - Guides (For Teachers) (052)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.  
DESCRIPTORS \*Curriculum Development; \*Educational Games;  
Elementary School Students; Elementary Secondary  
Education; Group Activities; \*Health Education;  
Nutrition; Safety; Secondary School Students

## ABSTRACT

The incorporation of games in health education classes is recommended. Different uses of games are presented along with criteria for the evaluation of games that are being considered for use in the classroom. Brief descriptions of the needs of elementary, middle, and high school students are followed by examples of appropriate games for each level. (Author/JD)

\*\*\*\*\*  
\* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made \*  
\* from the original document. \*  
\*\*\*\*\*

ED326501

## GAMESMANSHIP: IT'S NO TRIVIAL PURSUIT!

by

John R. Hjelm

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS  
MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

J. R. Hjelm

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES  
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
Office of Educational Research and Improvement  
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION  
CENTER (ERIC)

- ☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
- ☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

## **Gamesmanship: It's No Trivial Pursuit!**

### **Abstract**

The use of games in health education classes is recommended. Different uses of games are presented along with considerations for the evaluation of games which are being considered for use in the classroom. Brief descriptions of elementary, middle, and high school students are followed by examples of appropriate games for each.

SP 032 731

### **GAMESMANSHIP: IT'S NO TRIVIAL PURSUIT!**

Everyone enjoys a good game. Games can be a valuable addition to a health class, and the possibilities are endless. Although health-related games have been developed and marketed, many health teachers indicate that costs are prohibitive. Games do not have to be expensive; teachers can adapt used or donated games or make their own. Different types of games can be developed and used. Possibilities include adapting "oldies, but goodies" from childhood or developing takeoffs from television game shows. Games can enhance a health class. Some examples are presented later in this paper.

Games have several purposes. A game may be used as a reward by motivating students to complete tasks in order to play a game. A game may be used as a motivational strategy. The teacher can pique the curiosity of students by introducing a new unit with a game for the whole class. A game may be used as a review at the end of a unit.

### **EVALUATION OF GAMES**

The teacher should ask some questions before developing or using a game in a health class. Cornacchia, Olsen, and Nickerson (1) suggest the following:

1. Is the game appropriate for the age of the students?
2. What is the purpose for the game?
3. Will the game help students achieve the unit objectives?
4. Does the game emphasize learning over winning?
5. Are there potential side effects of the game?

Considering these questions in advance will help the teacher to use games

effectively. The result will be a more positive learning experience for the students.

### **ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

Elementary school children are extremely active and "doing" is important (2,3). Biehler and Snowman (3) recommend trying to "work activity into the lessons themselves." They also report that the children are usually eager to recite for the teacher and like organized games in small groups. Games can take advantage of the childrens' activity levels or of their desire to impress the teacher. Some suggestions follow.

#### **Fire escape**

The purpose of this game is to teach children how to escape from a burning room. Divide the class into groups of five. Give each group a bedsheet. A student holds each corner of the sheet. They spread out to form a "roof" at waist level. This is the "smoke." Those holding the sheet make the smoke seem to float by moving their hands up and down. The fifth student must crawl from one side of the sheet to the other while staying below the smoke.

#### **Spelling bee**

Even an "oldie, but goodie" can be used. It may be new to students. A spelling bee will help the students learn the vocabulary words in a specific unit. Divide the class into two teams. Have students on each team alternate in spelling the words. The team is awarded a point when a word is spelled correctly. The other team has a chance to spell the same word if it is misspelled. This continues until someone spells the word correctly. For a variation read the definition instead of pronouncing the word. The student must identify the correct word and then spell it.

## MIDDLE SCHOOL

James (4) has identified six pairs of personal needs of middle school children: the need to be needed and to need, to move inward and to affect the outer world, for intensity and for routine, for myth and for fact, for physical activity and for stillness, for separateness and for belonging. The middle school child "should be ready to discover relationships, seek answers to questions, determine where and how to find the information needed, and figure out how to organize and evaluate that information. Students should become active participants in the learning process, make choices, and learn to work independently" (5). Almost any game can work with this age group. The teacher must be able to recognize the mood of a class or individuals in order to know what will work best at any given time. Some suggestions follow.

### **Crossword puzzles**

Crossword puzzles can be used to introduce or review the vocabulary of the unit. Including words from previous units can help students remember the content of those units and help tie the units together.

### **Clue**

The familiar board game Clue can be adapted for a health class. The goal is to determine where the person ate a meal and what foods he ate. Five groups of cards are prepared: (1) the rooms of the house, (2) six foods from the meat group, (3) six foods from the dairy group, (4) six foods from the fruit and vegetable group, and (5) six foods from the bread and cereal group. One card from each group is placed in an envelope. The goal is to determine what cards are in the envelope. The remaining cards are dealt to the players, and each tries to determine what is in the envelope by

moving a game piece from room to room and making guesses. The game reviews the four food groups.

### **Tic-tac-toe**

The object of this familiar game is to get three X's or three O's in a row. Teams earn X's and O's by correctly answering questions related to the unit. The teacher prepares the question. Divide the class into two teams. Ask a question of one member of Team X. A correct response to the question earns an X for that team. An incorrect response gives the next member Team O an opportunity to earn an O by correctly answering the question. Next, the O's get a turn. This game can be used as introductory activity for the unit. The answers provide information about the knowledge and misconceptions of class. It may also motivate them to learn more about the topic. This game can also serve as a review of the unit.

## **HIGH SCHOOL**

The adolescent "craves to achieve adult status"; each wants "to be important, to have standing in the group, and to be recognized as a person of worth" (6). Games which are perceived as adult games or which provide opportunities to gain approval of team members may be most effective. Some suggestions follow.

### **Trivial Pursuit**

An adaptation of Trivial Pursuit can be an excellent yearend review. Choose six areas of health (e.g. fitness, community health, family and social health) and write questions about those topics. Students may write the questions. Combine the questions from several classes, and prepare to play. Follow the rules of Trivial Pursuit.

### **First aid Olympics**

The purpose of this game is to practice first aid skills. Plan the events using skills covered in the first aid units. Divide the class into two teams. Explain the events. Examples are applying a sling, carrying someone using a two-handed seat, and performing rescue breathing. Each team meets to determine who will participate in each event. Everyone must participate in the same number of events. Points are scored in two ways for each event. The first participant to complete the skill receives one point. Everyone who completes the skill properly receives two points. Keep a running score on the chalkboard for each team.

### **Classroom Feud**

The popular television game show, Family Feud, can be adapted for classroom use. Prior preparation is required. Use some time at a teachers' meeting for this preparation. Ask the teachers to provide information such as the following: "Name a fruit.", "How many Calories in a Big Mac?", "Name an aerobic exercise.", and "Name a way to reduce stress."

On game day divide the class into two groups. Ask a question to one member of each team. The one who provides the answer with the highest percentage of responses (from the survey of teachers) gets control of the question. Team members take turns trying to supply the other answers from the survey. If the team lists all the answers from the survey question, it wins the round. If unable to complete the list, the other team gets one chance to steal by naming one more answer. It is important to be ready to discuss the implications of the answers. Some may be wrong. This provides an opportunity to discuss misperceptions as well as the importance of knowing the material. Some appropriate answers may be

omitted from the list, and this also may provoke some discussion. Wrong answers on the survey may even motivate the class to publish an educational newsletter for the faculty!

### CONCLUSION

Examination of these games indicates that there is a number of variables to be considered in addition to the age of the students. The games have different purposes. Fire Escape and the First Aid Olympics provide skill practice. Crossword puzzles communicate new information. Trivial pursuit and spelling bees review information previously presented. Tic-Tac-Toe serves as a motivating introduction to a unit.

The examples serve different size groups, also. Individuals work crossword puzzles. Board games are suitable for small groups. Classroom Feud and Tic-Tac-Toe are games for the whole class.

Health games can be developed using a variety of sources. Trivial Pursuit and Clue are derived from commercially marketed board games. Classroom Feud is adapted from a television game show. Fire Escape and the First Aid Olympics were conceived by individual teachers.

These games serve as examples of how games may be used in the classroom. It is hoped that these examples will cause teachers to start thinking about the possibilities. Some already may have thought of variations that would customize the examples provided. Teachers can discover new ideas by a visit to the toy department of a local store, by watching television, and by listening to students, friends, and other teachers. The only limitation is the teacher's imagination!

### References

1. Cornacchia HJ, Olsen LK, Nickerson CJ: *Health in Elementary Schools* (6th ed.). St. Louis, Times Mirror/Mosby College Publishing, 1984, p. 391.
2. Elkind D: *A sympathetic understanding of the child birth to sixteen*. Boston, Allyn & Bacon, 1974, pp. 66-89.
3. Biehler RF: *Psychology Applied to Teaching* (4th Ed.). Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1982, pp. 97-114.
4. James C: *Beyond Customs: An Educator's Journey*. New York, Agathon Press, 1974, pp. 17-46.
5. Kindred LW, Wolotkiewicz RJ, Mickelson JM, Coplein LE, & Dyson E: *The Middle School Curriculum: A Practitioner's Handbook*. (2nd ed. ). Boston, Allyn & Bacon, 1981, p. 12.
6. Blair GM, Jones RS, Simpson RH: Adolescent needs. In AR Gayles (ed.) *Instructional Planning in the Secondary School*. New York, David McKay, 1973, pp. 163-166.